

**MAINE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 2, 2002**

Chair William O’Gara called the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission to order at 1:00pm in the Maine Emergency Medical Services conference room, 156 Edison Drive, Augusta, Maine. Members present were Jay Bradshaw, Representative Thomas Bull, John Cannon, John Dean, Chief Darrel Fournier, Albert Godfrey, Sr., Edward Johnston, Randy Keep (by phone), Geoffrey Maker, Harty Norris, Senator William O’Gara, Chief Jethro Pease, Steve Willis and Susan Pinette (staff). Members absent were Michael Albert, Jack Berry, Chief Jeffrey Cammack, Representative Robert Duplessie, Representative Michael Quint, Senator Christine Savage, David Wacker and Bill Williams. Vicki Schmidt, Bureau of Land and Water Quality, and Marlene Thiboutot attended as guests of the Fire Commission.

Fire Commission member Randy Keep joined the meeting by speakerphone to the pleasure of the Fire Commission. Chair O’Gara noted Randy’s valuable contribution to the Fire Commission and his community, citing a recent award.

A motion by Darrel Fournier, seconded by John Dean, to accept the minutes of October 7, 2002. The motion passed unanimously.

Staff distributed a recent newspaper article citing Chief Darrel Fournier as the recipient of Maine Municipal Association’s 2002 Maine Fire Chief of the Year. The annual award goes to fire chiefs nominated by their town officials.

Chair O’Gara noted that the Best Practices award has not officially been awarded and will ask John Cannon to make the presentation.

Chair O’Gara spoke briefly to the Fire Commission members about the November election and his final day as chair of the Fire Commission. Chair O’Gara encouraged the members to “continue their hard work “ and to “stay active”. “ I urge you to maintain your determination to come together and move in the correct direction, “ Chair O’Gara told the members. “Accomplish something that will mean something to the Fire Service.”

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Training Facilities: The Training Facilities subcommittee is working to put the survey data in workable form. Vicki Schmidt, Bureau of Land and Water Quality (GIS department) has agreed to assist subcommittee members to work through the database and to bring graphics to the Fire Commission’s report. At this point, the Fire Commission was given a presentation by Ms. Schmidt to see how the data transfers to visuals. Fire Commission members learned about the various types of software used by GIS, how town data is coded by geocode, and the limitations and problems to consider when applying the data to a map. Fire Commission members suggested the maps show proximity to fire stations and the fire department makeup. Members agreed to divide the

departments into three categories- career only, combination (career and call/volunteer), and call/volunteer only. Other suggestions included listing towns without fire departments, maintaining one master database, displaying the maps at the Fire Service Day at the Legislature on January 23rd, and forming a committee to work with Vicki on developing the maps. Members agreed that the committee should focus on information that will validate the report, show trends, and keep the maps simple and to the point. Members volunteering to work on the committee were Ted Johnston, John Dean, John Cannon, Jay Bradshaw, Steve Willis and Darrel Fournier.

Recruitment/Retention: Members learned that Penflex, Inc. was reworking the numbers for the length of service program per the suggestions of Fire Commission members at the October 28th meeting. A draft of Penflex's final report is expected by the January 2, 2003 meeting. Fire Commission members continued to discuss Penflex's October 28th presentation. Members agreed to review the final report and then forward to Dick Johnson, Maine Bureau of Insurance, for his review.

Fire Commission members discussed the new legislative session and issues for potential legislation. The following topics were discussed-

Fire Alarm: Members learned that the bill is being redrafted and input from the electrical community is being sought for their suggestions.

Statewide mutual aide: Members were informed that considerable work has been done on this issue. Vice Chair Fournier volunteered to discuss and work with Art Cleaves, Director of MEMA, on potential legislation for this session.

Fire Commission membership: Members agreed to expand membership of the Fire Commission, adding the directors or designee of MEMS and MEMA. Language will be drafted for board review.

Call Firefighter law: Legislation was submitted last session and some members expressed concern that the Fire Commission may be expected to take a formal position on similar legislation this session. Fire Commission members were reminded they had taken a position at their October 7th meeting to *not* take a position. (*See minutes 10-7-02*)

Members discussed the January 23rd Fire Service Day at the Legislature. The Hall of Flags in the State House has been reserved from 8am to 2pm. A variety of suggestions were offered. Fire Commission members agreed to provide refreshments in the morning and at lunchtime and inquiries will be made to seek donations from local departments. Other suggestions and comments involved session activities (i.e. color guard to post colors, morning prayers offered by a fire chaplain, presentation of Best Practice Award); table displays; groups being represented; target audience; finances; and the need to form a planning committee. Darrel Fournier, Tom Bull, Jay Bradshaw and John Cannon volunteered to serve on the committee.

Fire Commission members next discussed the idea of a one day conference at the Augusta Civic Center featuring group sessions, afternoon workshops and a national speaker. Members suggested the conference would be an annual event, offering fire service and EMS personnel opportunities to learn and share new information. Steve Willis offered to develop a concept paper for the next meeting. Members were

encouraged to share their ideas and suggestions on topics of interest to their particular agency; what might be helpful and informative; and potential speakers, panel members and subjects.

Members discussed the importance of maintaining communication with fire service personnel. Development of a monthly or quarterly newsletter was suggested. Members discussed the need to inform fire service members of the Fire Commission's accomplishments and future plans. Members agreed that regular contact was important, especially to those departments responding to Fire Commission surveys. Members made many suggestions including a one-page newsletter that would feature bullets, GIS information and other items of interest. Members also discussed ideas for distributing the newsletter- posting on bulletin boards, being added to fire service groups' newsletters, and mailing the newsletters. Members expressed concern with the potential costs and the lack of Fire Commission resources. Federal grant money was suggested as a possible solution.

Chair O'Gara thanked the Fire Commission members for their "terrific work" and "expects the (Fire) Commission will be successful in whatever they do." In the absence of a quorum and with no further business to come before the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission, Chair O'Gara adjourned the meeting at 3:10pm.

The Maine Fire Protection Services Commission has scheduled the following dates:

Monday, January 6, 2003	10:00am	Training Facilities subcommittee
Monday, January 6, 2003	1:00pm	Regular Commission meeting
Thursday, January 23, 2003	8am-2:00pm	Fire Service Day-Hall of Flags
Monday, February 3, 2003	1:00pm	Regular Commission meeting

Respectfully submitted,

Susan M. Pinette (staff)